AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-57 (canceled)

58. (Currently amended) A computerized wagering game apparatus, comprising:

a computerized game controller comprising a processor with a memory and an operating system stored in said memory, the controller further comprising a game state storage, a nonvolatile storage, the computerized game controller being operable to control a computerized wagering game;

an operating system comprising an operating system kernel and a system handler application, the operating system kernel and system handler application operable to dynamically link with a plurality of gaming program shared objects and device handlers and load said gaming program shared objects and device handlers;

the system handler application comprising an Application Program Interface comprising functions callable from the gaming program shared objects, the Application Program Interface comprising a plurality of gaming functions callable by and used by at least some of the shared objects;

the system handler application operable to initiate a game based on data variables stored in the nonvolatile storage, the system handler application operable to write game data variables to at least one of the game state storage and nonvolatile storage, the system handler application is operable to load at least one of the gaming program shared objects in response to a change in the stored game data variables by another of the at least one gaming program shared objects; and

the game state storage including a look-up table for the data variables stored in the nonvolatile storage.

59. (Previously presented) The computerized wagering game apparatus of claim 58, wherein the system handler application further comprises an event handler.

60. (Previously presented) The computerized wagering game apparatus of claim 58, wherein the system handler application comprises software having the ability when executed to:

unload a previous gaming program shared object or device handler if a previous object or device handler has been loaded;

load a new gaming program shared object or device handler; and

execute the new gaming program shared object or device handler.

61. (Previously presented) The computerized wagering game apparatus of claim 58, wherein data variables modified by the gaming program shared objects are stored by the system handler application in the nonvolatile storage and a game state storage, and the system handler application functions to verify that the operating system or code for a shared object has not changed.

62. (Previously presented) The computerized wagering game apparatus of claim 61 wherein the game state storage provides a variable name index to associated variable data locations within the nonvolatile storage.

63. (Previously presented) The computerized wagering game apparatus of claim 62, wherein changing a data variable in nonvolatile storage causes execution of a corresponding callback function in one of the gaming program shared objects of the system handler application.

64. (Previously presented) The computerized wagering game apparatus of claim 58, wherein the computerized game controller comprises an IBM PC-compatible computer.

65. (Previously presented) The computerized wagering game apparatus of claim 58, wherein the operating system kernel is a Linux operating system kernel.

66. (Previously presented) The computerized wagering game apparatus of claim 65, wherein the Linux operating system kernel has at least one selected device handler disabled.

67. (Previously presented) The computerized wagering game apparatus of claim 66, wherein the at least one selected device handler that is disabled is selected from the group consisting of a keyboard handler, an I/O port handler, a network interface handler, a storage device controller handler, and a I/O device handler.

68. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 58, wherein the system handler application and the operating system kernel work in communication to hash system handler application code and operating system kernel code.

69. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 68 wherein the operating system is controlled by a general-purpose computer and the nonvolatile storage stores program variables, such that loss of power does not result in loss of the state of the computerized wagering game system, and the system handler application loads a first shared object and the first shared object calls up a gaming function from within an Application Program Interface.

70. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 69 wherein the system application handler loads and executes a single shared object at any one time, and wherein the system application handler shares data with at least one other shared object upon execution of the at least one other shared object ~~but other shared objects are operable to share data via the program variables stored in nonvolatile storage~~.

71. (Currently amended) A method of managing data in a computerized wagering game apparatus via a system handler application, comprising:

(a) executing an operating system which then loads and operates an operating system kernel and a system handler application, both the operating system kernel and system handler application operable to dynamically link with a plurality of gaming program shared objects and device handlers and load said shared objects and device handlers, the system handler application comprising an Application Program Interface comprising a plurality of functions callable from at least some of the shared objects, the system handler application operable to initiate a game based on data variables stored in a nonvolatile storage and the system handler application operable to write game data variables to one of the nonvolatile storage or a games state storage, the game state storage comprising a look-up table for data variables stored in the nonvolatile storage,

(b) the system handler application then loading a first shared object and providing Application Program Interface functions called by the first shared object,

(c) the system handler application then executing the first shared object,

(d) the system handler application then storing data variables in the nonvolatile storage, such that a second shared object ~~later~~ or a first device handler ~~loaded~~ can access the data variables in nonvolatile storage by utilizing the look-up table of the game state storage,

(e) the system handler application then unloading the first shared object,

(f) the system handler application then loading other shared objects and repeating steps (b) through (e) for said other shared objects,

(g) the operating system kernel then loading at least one additional shared object and repeating steps (b) through (e) for said at least one additional shared object,

(h) the system handler application then loading at least one device handler and repeating steps (b) through (e) for said at least one device handler, and

(i) the operating system kernel then loading at least one additional device handler and repeating steps (b) through (e) for said at least one additional device handler.

72. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71 further comprising the system handler application executing a corresponding callback function upon alteration of variable data in nonvolatile storage.

73. (Previously presented) The method of claim 71 further comprising handling events via the system handler application.

74. (New) The apparatus of claim 58, wherein the wagering game comprises a plurality of segments each comprising a gaming program shared object, wherein the system handler is operable to dynamically change the wagering game from one of the plurality of segments to another of the plurality of segments in response to the change in the stored game data variables.

75. (New) The apparatus of claim 74, wherein the system handler is operable to dynamically change the segment of the wagering game in response to a change in at least one of the device handlers.